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DO WE (AGAIN) MAKE THE BILL WITHOUT THE PEOPLE?  
HUMAN SECURITY FOR THE INCLUSIVE CITY  
AND THE POLITICAL DIMENSION  
OF INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE<sup>1</sup>

ABSTRACT

*Reading the subtitle one may ask what concepts stand behind these catchwords and the intended goals. The following notions will try to give a direction to the answers to some questions along three strands, namely:*

- 1. human security in the cities;*
  - 2. human rights instruments at the local level;*
  - 3. the example of the human rights city Graz;*
- Finally, as a conclusion, I will propose four hypotheses.*

What concept of security are we talking about, especially what concept of *human* security? What does «inclusive» mean and what are inclusive cities? If we are talking about Europe, do we mean states, societies, European Union – including candidate countries, member states of the Council of Europe? Which «cultures» shall have an «intercultural dialogue»? And what kind of *dialogue* do we have in mind? Further more, is the concept of «new citizenship» an utopian notion? Besides the conceptual questions, there arise also technical and procedural questions, such as: Where to start with human rights mainstreaming? Particularly in cities which are usually not the source of human rights legislation and mostly not directly accountable for human rights implementation or human rights violation? Most of the questions are, though not yet answered, filled with substance by Professor Papisca's conference working paper<sup>2</sup> which gives an outline of where research has to begin. The paper shows the direction and gives a framework of agreed and accepted concepts and basic documents<sup>3</sup>.

## I. HUMAN SECURITY IN CITIES

Human security in the city is undisputed as a promising policy concept for cities, especially mega-cities, in so-called developing countries and particularly in such involved in violent conflicts or in post-conflict situations, as the *narrow* understanding of human security deals with situations of violent conflict as a topic of foreign and development policy. There had been much discussion *which* threats the human security policy should protect people from. The UNDP approach considers threats to economic, food, health, environmental, personal, community, and political security<sup>4</sup>. However, different approaches and definitions try to broaden or narrow, reduce or subsume the mentioned list of threats<sup>5</sup>. In his recent study for UNESCO, *Human Security and Human Rights Inter-Action*, Wolfgang Benedek<sup>6</sup> suggests a definition of human security as the security of people against threats to human dignity. This definition has clear advantages compared to others:

1. it gives no space to value security higher than dignity and human rights<sup>7</sup>;

2. it has the same central point and justification as human rights have: human dignity<sup>8</sup>;

3. it encompasses all threats that have been mentioned and gives the threshold for political action, namely when human dignity is in danger, and it complies with the human security formula «freedom from fear and freedom from want»;

4. it avoids the concepts of protection which imply that *only* governments are responsible for preventing individuals from risks to security; the proposed definition includes also accountability of private actors for human security;

5. finally, it opens the door to arguments for human security policies in cities at high welfare levels. There has been some discussion on why the human security concept should be applied as well in European cities. The brief reason is that human security is needed wherever security is *at risk* of being threatened.

In a paper, presented in the ETC-«Human Security Perspectives»<sup>9</sup>, I introduced a few notions based on the idea that governments (or societies) have to establish conditions which give individuals the space and the chance to the «freedom of pursuing well-being and living the life they value»<sup>10</sup>. In doing so, threats will be prevented. Of course, this does not say anything about how societies

could act to protect their members from threats to human dignity.

The next question is whether a human security approach is appropriate or justified if most of the conditions are provided for the majority of residents, i.e. rule of law and democracy? To my point of view it is appropriate and justified. The need for human security is not limited to a certain welfare level, many people suffer from a lack of human security due to various forms of discrimination.

Two problems need to be regarded in more detail:

– Firstly, it has to be asked whether human security, fear, want, the need of self-respect and social recognition, and even human dignity can be defined *objectively* by the society or the government (although democratically elected), as these concepts are individually and subjectively perceived and felt. Referring to the social choice theory (Arrow Paradoxon)<sup>11</sup>, the answer is: no, it cannot. It is impossible to aggregate individual utility functions based on preferences to a social utility function; the same is true for human security functions<sup>12</sup>. Among others, «the life you value» is correlated with the level of economic welfare and mutually interlinked with social and cultural values. In order to participate actively in a society and to be recognised as a valuable member, it might be necessary to have a mobile phone, clean shoes, a TV set; it matters where you live and what job you have. Threats to human security are not operationalised in absolute terms but they vary with the society one is living in or a member of.

– Secondly, the problem of majority rules and with this strongly correlated, the distribution of welfare and power as well as the weaknesses of democratic concepts influence the chances of achieving well-being. One significant difference between cities in developing countries and European cities is that in the former, a vast majority suffers from a lack of human security while in the latter, it is the various minorities who are in danger of being denied appropriate security and safety. Discrimination, the denial of equal rights, equal treatment and equal opportunities are the prerequisites of threats to human security. Discrimination is any (unequal) treatment which offends a person in her/his identity and thus denies human dignity<sup>13</sup>. Members of minorities are discriminated against in many ways:

1. As in a democratic process majorities usually take decisions, minorities depend on the protection by majority voters and on the insight of majority voters to minorities' vital interests. In many ways, this is not the case in respect to and in terms of the human security approach:

– if minorities have the right to vote, they are frustrated by being over-ruled in many cases;

– if they do not have the right to vote, they do not even have the formal opportunity to change their situation through political participation.

2. Minorities are often socially segregated or marginalised, economically disadvantaged, in danger of poverty – their daily life is determined by uncertainty and insecurity. The consequences are well-known: less favourable education, unemployment, risk of ill health, drug addiction, crime, denied social recognition, frustration – fear and want, a life one does not value. All in all, a clear call for a human security agenda in the (European) city.

## 2. HUMAN RIGHTS INSTRUMENTS AT LOCAL LEVEL

In fact, human security and human rights do enhance each other. However, there is no right to human security. Therefore, the human rights approach as a legally binding instrument and a system of empowerment is at the core of the human security agenda. What can human rights contribute at local level? As the responsibility for protection, promotion and prevention lies with the state, why should cities intervene? And how can they take action if there is the absence of a competence for legislation and judicial enforcement? However, the requirement for involvement is clear:

- half of the world's population lives in urban areas;
- cities' populations are socially and culturally diverse;
- conflicts arise out of this situation which need to be resolved peacefully and with proportionate means;
- cities are the focal point of residential identification (rather than nationality).

The human rights concept provides a guiding principle for a peaceful living together and for the prevention/resolution of conflicts.

The goals of any city government may be pursued by applying the human rights approach, as it is an organising principle and a tool to:

- ensure peace;
- protect individual liberty;
- guarantee equality;
- give reasons for identification and integration;
- foster social cohesion.

This leads us to human rights mainstreaming. I will present three concrete examples of introducing human rights mainstreaming at local level:

- a. Charter for Human Rights in the City;
- b. Human Rights Cities;
- c. Coalition of Cities against Racism.

a. The «Charter»<sup>14</sup> was formulated by four Western European cities as a document translating international human rights into the context of the local level. The Charter is addressed to city governments as a guiding principle for their political action. The goal is the achievement of standards and results. Thus, it has a procedural and a substantial component of achievement. The subscribed cities are informally organised in a network. The network organises a biannual conference for the more than 220 member cities and attempts to provide some evaluation of the achievement, which is, of course, a rather weak instrument when the persons in charge evaluate their own policy. However, progress has been made and the exchange of experience and examples of good practice seems to be attractive. The network operates almost exclusively at government level.

b. The concept of «human rights cities» is a NGO-centred initiative<sup>15</sup>. It puts emphasis on the procedure to achieve a peaceful, diverse society. The human rights cities concept commits itself in continuous efforts to human rights education at all levels of society. Accordingly, some institutions and measures are required to ensure continuity, progress and consequences. In the first stage, a human rights inventory has to be made by a human rights assembly of all stakeholders concerned. This forms the basis for the elaboration of an action plan which should be agreed on by the City Council to get formal commitments. A Human Rights Committee has to be set up. The Committee monitors and evaluates the progress. Institutions for human rights education for various target groups will be assigned. There is, however, no formal network of cities.

c. UNESCO launched the «Coalition of Cities against Racism» in 2004<sup>16</sup>. The coalition is an institutionalised network within six regions, each of them establishes a Steering Committee and gets scientific support of UNESCO and assigned research institutions<sup>17</sup>. The «Coalition» focuses on:

- promoting vigilance against racism;

- monitoring of incidents;
- protection of vulnerable groups;
- empowerment of vulnerable groups;
- conflict resolution, conflict mediation and sanctioning racist offends.

Adhering cities sign ten commitments for action against racism encompassing monitoring, housing, education, labour market, racist crime and others<sup>18</sup>.

TAB. 1. *Comparison of Concepts for the Implementation of Human Rights at Local Level*

	<b>Human Rights Cities</b>	<b>Coalition of Cities against Racism</b>	<b>Charter for the Safeguarding...</b>
Geographical scope	World-wide, particularly developing countries	World-wide, 6 regions	Europe
Substantial scope	Human Rights according to UDHR	Racism, discrimination, xenophobia	Human Rights according to binding international HR laws
Initiators	PDHRE (NGO)	UNESCO	Conference of Cities for the Safeguarding of Human Rights (municipal level)
Network	«loose»	Institutionalized, headed by UNESCO, organised in 6 regions with a leading city and a steering committee in each region	Conference of Cities for the Safeguarding of Human Rights; Congregations every 2 years on 10 December
Implementing Institutions	City governments in cooperation with NGOs	City governments	City governments
(Formal) Commitment	Resolution of city councils	Resolution of city councils	Resolution of city councils
Overall goal	Promoting peaceful living together on the basis of human rights	Repelling racism and discrimination	Bringing HR to the level where they have relevance for the daily lives
Main instruments to reach the goals	Human rights education and learning	Comprehensive policy strategies, adapted to respond to concrete problems	Comprehensive policy strategies, targeted to concrete achievements
Method of implementation	Participation	Governance, delegation	Governance
Education is:	Instrument	Instrument and result	Result

3. THE EXAMPLE OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS CITY GRAZ

What does the example of Graz show? Can we learn about intercultural dialogue, human rights mainstreaming and the implementation of human security concepts? Yes, there are some good practices and they are deemed to be applicable to other cities irrespective their size and other specific parameters<sup>19</sup>. Unfortunately, the example shows also difficulties in practical and political implementation, barriers, reluctance, ignorance, etc.

What has been started and what has been achieved? The human rights city had a magnificent start in 2001. Initially, the City Council adopted a Resolution<sup>20</sup> stating that human rights are the underlying principle of all political activity and the evaluation measure for its outcome (human rights mainstreaming). Human rights education was recognised as the key to progress towards a city of self-responsible citizens whose dignity is respected. Living a culture of human rights shall be achieved.

The stakeholders' assembly elaborated an inventory and a plan of action<sup>21</sup>, proposing activities as well as redefining tasks of authorities and NGOs. After the elections in 2003 a period of stagnation prevailed. Since 2005 the process has regained some of its initial dynamics.

What we can learn is that a primarily top-down implementation bears some risks for the progress. In Graz, the project would have come to a stop if there were not NGOs and institutions established which keep it alive. Human rights mainstreaming can only work within a close but critical cooperation between government, administration and civil society organisations to ensure sustainability. The recent accession to the European Coalition of Cities against Racism and the adopted plan of action may push the process forward again.

A good basis of institutions to provide a framework and forum for dialogue was established. Graz counts on the system of «advisory boards». There is now a migrants' council, a human rights council, an inter-religious council and a department for integration. All of them are assigned with the task of maintaining «dialogue», which lacks of any further definition.

Some questions have remained without answers: as these institutions counsel the government, the dialogue might be *inter pares*; but, there is no institutionalised dialogue between *people* and

*authorities.* The dialogue between the councils is not institutionalised either. The membership or participation of Council members in the human rights council is discussed but not yet decided.

Beside these structural questions, there are further systematic and procedural ones: there is no guarantee that the dialogue will take place in reality, on whose initiative and on what events or incidences it will take place. It is not sure whether solutions can be found. There is neither a mechanism ensuring that proposals by the advisory boards will be discussed by politicians, authorities and decision-makers nor that appropriate and binding decisions will be taken. Even though the dialogue within civil society is a good balance to governmental activity, it remains open who will be responsible for implementation, realisation, enforcement. Who is accountable and who will evaluate the achievements? In the end, the voters will evaluate the policy. But, will they realise changes and will they value the achievements? And, are those allowed to vote who are concerned? So, do we (again!) make the bill without the people?

#### 4. CONCLUDING HYPOTHESES

As a conclusion I can present four hypotheses which might be useful for further research and action:

1. All societies are «developing» societies – as long as human security is not achieved by all (which will never happen, as reasoned above);

2. The «inclusive city» is a goal, which can be pursued by participatory democracy and «solidary individualism», recognising that there is no «social human security function»:

3. a. Intercultural dialogue is the method of participatory democracy and

b. Human rights mainstreaming / a culture of human rights provide the framework for negotiation and are the basic principles of conflict resolution, understood as a bottom-up approach to balance the paternalistic conceptions of protection by governments.

4. City networks are the catalyst for an inclusive Europe as they reflect a union of societies rather than a union of states.



<sup>1</sup> This paper is based on a keynote speech, held by the author on 24 March 2006, at the University of Padua at the starting conference on «Intercultural Dialogue and Human Rights: Inclusive Cities in an Inclusive Europe».

<sup>2</sup> A. Papisca, *Intercultural Dialogue and Human Rights: Inclusive Cities in an Inclusive Europe*, working paper, Padova, 2006.

<sup>3</sup> Declaration of the Scientific Committee of the first EU-ECSA World Conference on «Intercultural Dialogue», Brussels, 2002; Second Conference of ECSA World, *Dialogue between Peoples and Cultures. Actors in the Dialogue*, Brussels, 2004; The European Year of Intercultural Dialogue 2008: Commission of the European Communities, *Proposal for a Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council Concerning the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue (2008)*, COM(2005) 467 final.

<sup>4</sup> UNDP, *Human Development Report 1994*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1994, p. 24.

<sup>5</sup> For example: UNESCO, *Promoting Human Security: Ethical, Normative and Educational Frameworks in Latin America and the Caribbean*, Paris, UNESCO, 2005, p. 93. For an overview see: G. Oberleitner, *Human Security: A Challenge to International Law?*, in «Global Governance», n. 11, 2005, pp. 185-203.

<sup>6</sup> W. Benedek, *Human Security and Human Rights Inter-Action*, 2006, p. 12, not yet published; available at University of Graz, Institute for International Law and International Relations.

<sup>7</sup> Compare G. Oberleitner, *Human Security...*, cit., p. 187.

<sup>8</sup> W. Benedek, *Human Security and Human Rights*, p. 11, not yet published.

<sup>9</sup> K. Starl, *Human Security - What Does It Means in the Context of a «Rich» City?*, in «Human Security Perspectives», vol. 1, 2004, p. 30, available at [www.etc-graz.at](http://www.etc-graz.at).

<sup>10</sup> Commission on Human Security, *Human Security Now*, New York, Commission on Human Security, 2003, p. 10.

<sup>11</sup> K.J. Arrow, *Social Choice and Individual Values*, New York, John Wiley & Sons Inc., 1963.

<sup>12</sup> Rawls suggests to avoid the problem by attributing the dictatorship to the «worst-off» individual of any given society in a certain situation, J. Rawls, *Theory of Justice*, Cambridge, The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1971. Sen rejects the utility-function approach by introducing the «capability approach», A. Sen, *Inequality Re-Examined*, New York, Harvard University Press, 1992.

<sup>13</sup> W. Kälin, *Grundrechte im Kulturkonflikt*, Zürich, NZZ Verlag, 2000, p. 106.

<sup>14</sup> The Charter for the Safeguarding of Human Rights in the City is available at [www.menschenrechte.nuernberg.de](http://www.menschenrechte.nuernberg.de).

<sup>15</sup> The New York based NGO Peoples' Decade for Human Rights Education (PDHRE) introduced the initiative. For details see [www.pdhre.org](http://www.pdhre.org).

<sup>16</sup> UNESCO, for details see [www.unesco.org/shs/citiesagainstracism](http://www.unesco.org/shs/citiesagainstracism).

<sup>17</sup> Studies on the implementation of measures against racism are available at [www.etc-graz.at](http://www.etc-graz.at): *Study on Measures Taken by Municipalities and Recommendations for Further Action to Achieve: Greater Vigilance against Racism, Commitment 1 of the Ten-Point Plan of Action*, European Training and Research Centre for Human Rights and Democracy, 2005 and *Study on Measures Taken by Municipalities and Recommendations for Further Action to Challenge Racism through Education, Commitment 8 of the Ten-Point Plan of Action*, European Training and Research Centre for Human Rights and Democracy, 2005.

<sup>18</sup> See [www.unesco.org/shs/citiesagainstracism](http://www.unesco.org/shs/citiesagainstracism): *The Ten Point Action Plan*.

<sup>19</sup> For the development of tables of «replicability» of measures see: K. Starl, A. Stocker et al., *Study on Measures Taken by Municipalities and Recommendations for Further Action to Achieve: Greater Vigilance against Racism*, Commitment 1 of the Ten-Point Plan of Action, 2005, p. 95.

<sup>20</sup> Menschenrechtserklärung der Stadt Graz, of 8 February 2001.

<sup>21</sup> E. Schöfer, *Bestandsaufnahme und Aktionsprogramm*, occasional paper n. 6, 2002, available at [www.etc-graz.at](http://www.etc-graz.at).